


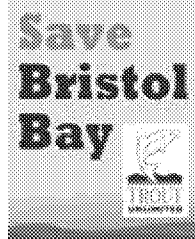


Message

**From:** Tim Bristol, Trout Unlimited [tbristol@tu.org]  
**Sent:** 3/31/2014 5:33:44 PM  
**To:** Fertik, Rachel [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1a6c790cf3c54a61a6dbb8668509d74c-RFertik]  
**Subject:** EPA Response to Public Comments to the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment Confirms Overwhelming Support for EPA Action to Protect World-Class Fishery

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## **EPA Response to Public Comments to the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment Confirms Overwhelming Support for EPA Action to Protect World-Class Fishery**

*EPA releases response to public comment periods during its Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment; over 75% of comments were in support of EPA action against the Pebble Mine*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 31, 2014

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ANCHORAGE, AK – The Environmental Protection Agency's **Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment** generated well over **1.1 million total comments, with approximately 850,000 – or about 77 percent- of the comments in favor of EPA action to prevent mining the Pebble deposit.** This news is contained within an EPA response to public comment, which the agency recently released.

The EPA took the time to analyze and respond to nearly 15,000 unique comments, an indication of the agency's commitment to thoroughness, transparency, and its willingness to listen to the public during the Watershed Assessment process. Many of the unique comments came from the Bristol Bay region, where the support for EPA action ran strong. Prior analysis also demonstrated that EPA action was overwhelmingly supported by the Alaskans who commented. And while the mass-mailed comments in support of EPA action came from a wide array of coalition partners, nearly all of the opposition came from a single organization backed by mining interests.

"The EPA confirms what we heard during both rounds of public comment periods for the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment – the people of Alaska and the American public overwhelmingly support EPA action to stop the Pebble Mine," said Tim Bristol, TU's Alaska Program director. "As the EPA continues the Clean Water Act 404(c) process to

protect Bristol Bay, it will do so knowing the American people are behind their efforts. The EPA deserves to be lauded for their thorough, transparent, and scientific approach to protecting Bristol Bay and the unparalleled opportunities it provides to sportsmen and women.”

The EPA’s Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment was the product of three years of scientific research and was finalized in January. The report determined that even without a likely accident, mines on the scale of the proposed Pebble Mine could destroy up to 94 miles of salmon-spawning streams and 5,350 acres of wetlands, ponds and lakes in the Bristol Bay area – the region that supports a \$1.5 billion commercial fishery and 14,000 jobs, as well as one of the best recreational fisheries on the planet. In February, the EPA announced it would begin the Clean Water Act 404(c) process to determine the best way to protect Bristol Bay from the harm caused by mining the Pebble deposit.

“Like the Watershed Assessment, the 404(c) process will contain additional opportunities for public input,” said Nelli Williams, TU’s Alaska Program deputy director. “We hope everyone who believes that Bristol Bay is worth protecting continues to stay engaged. There will be opportunities to speak up and let the EPA and others know that Bristol Bay is unique and deserves protection.”

The EPA response can be found on its main Bristol Bay page at <http://www2.epa.gov/bristolbay>.

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